THE FUNNY PAGES GET "DARK" AND "EDGY"!
DC
SWEATSHOP
#4
SEP 03
BAGGE
RYAN
GLADDEN
BLANCHARD
THIS ISN'T YOUR FATHER'S FREDDY FERRET!
?!?
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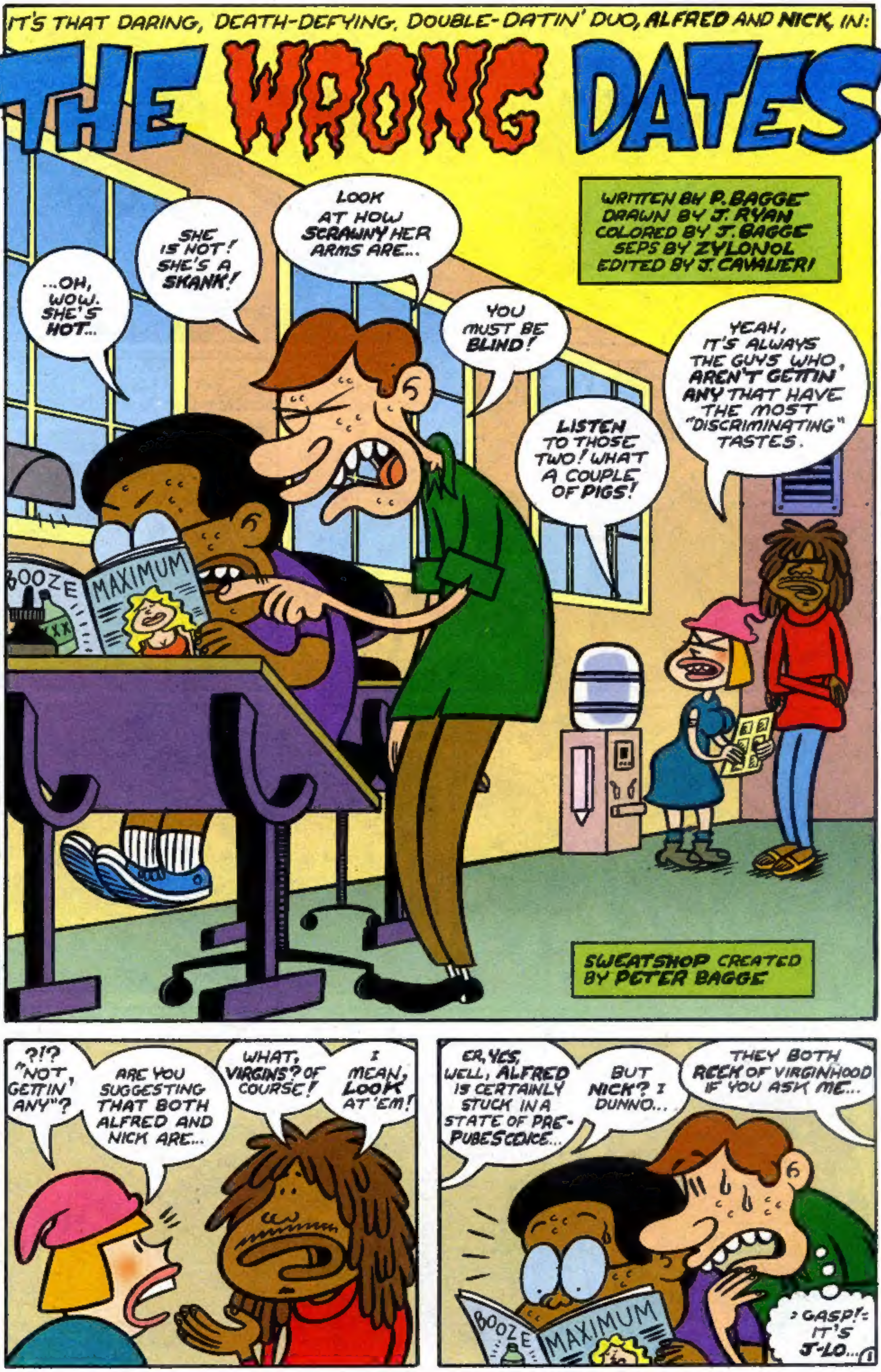
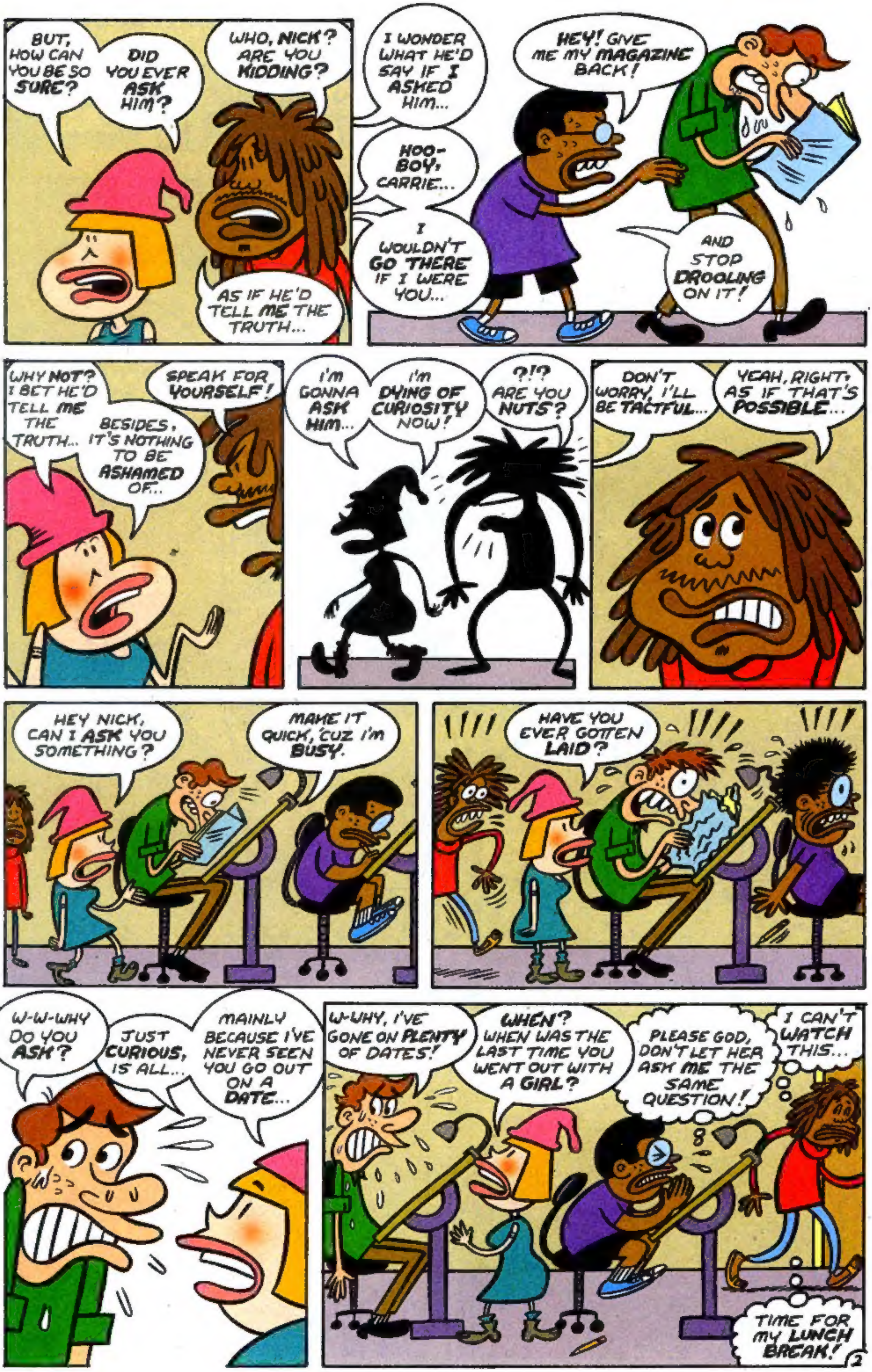
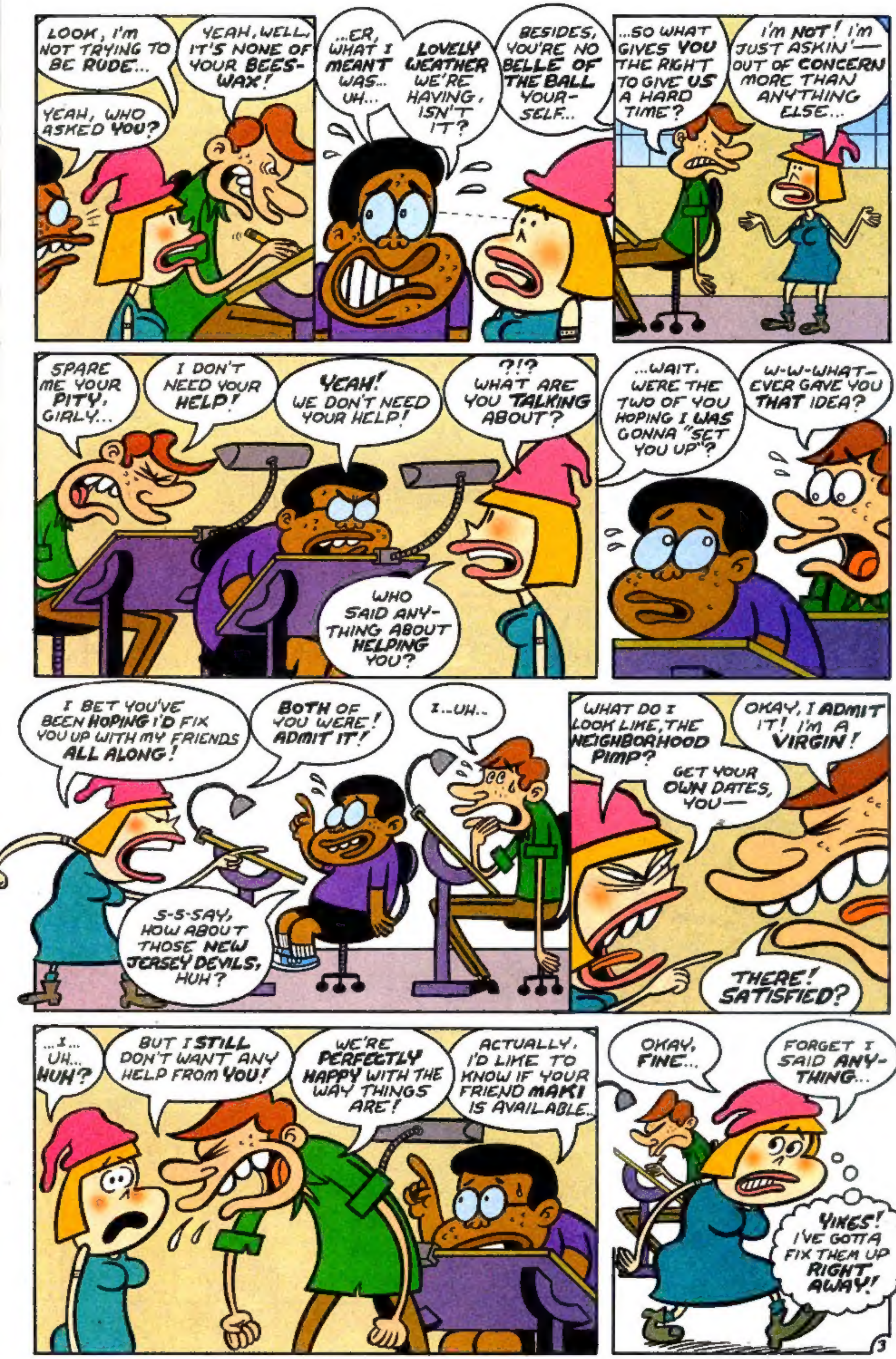
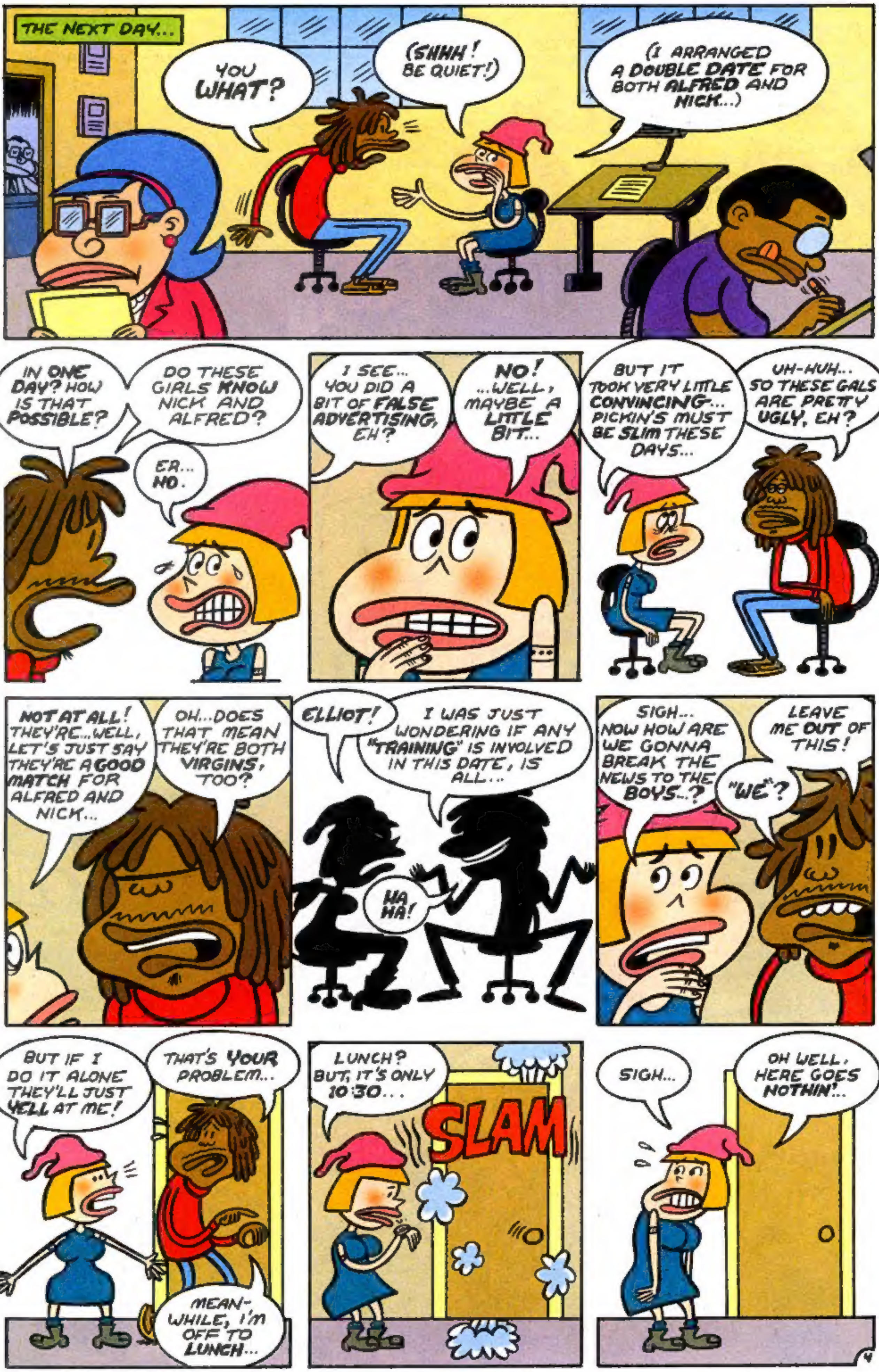
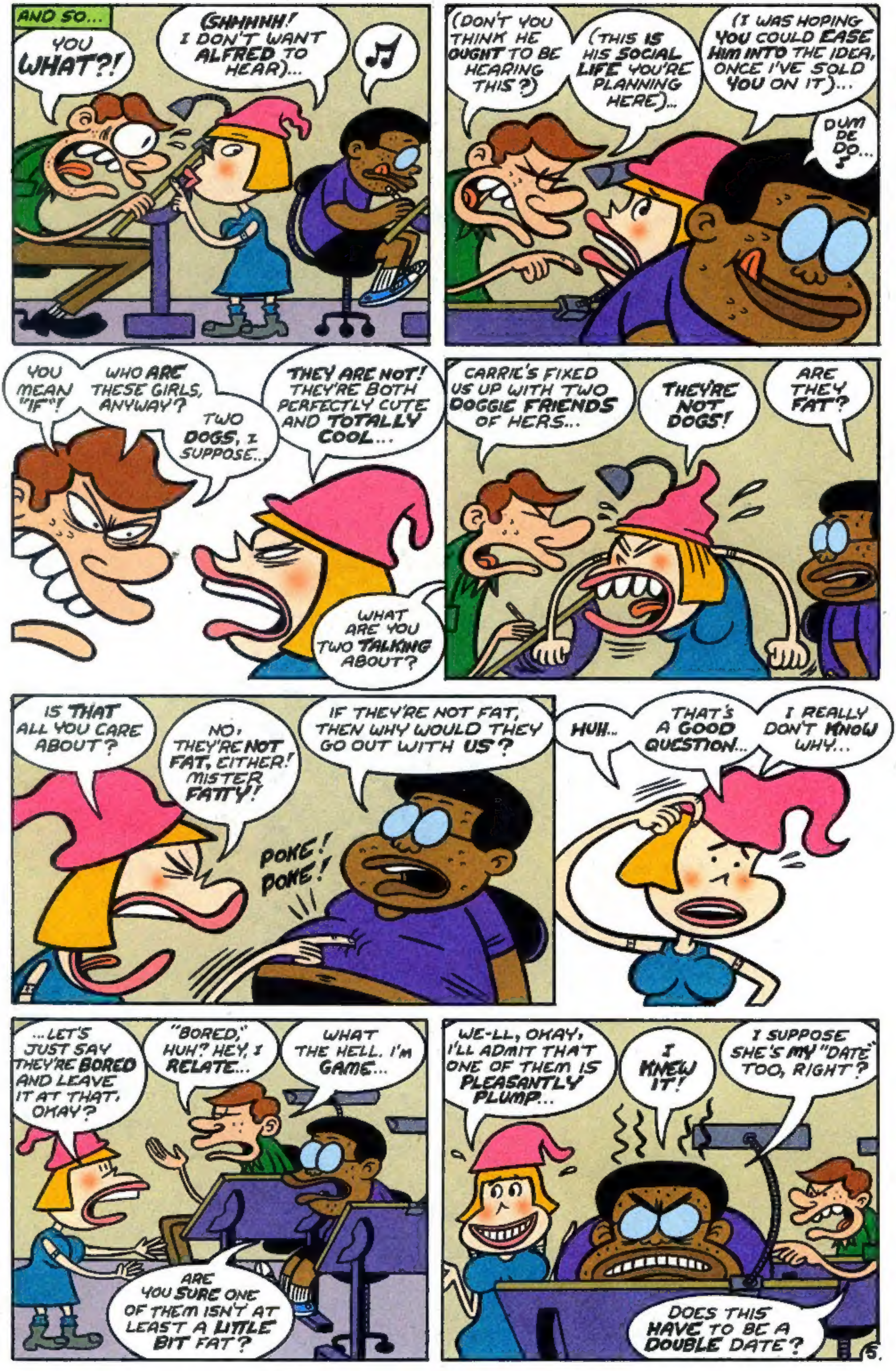


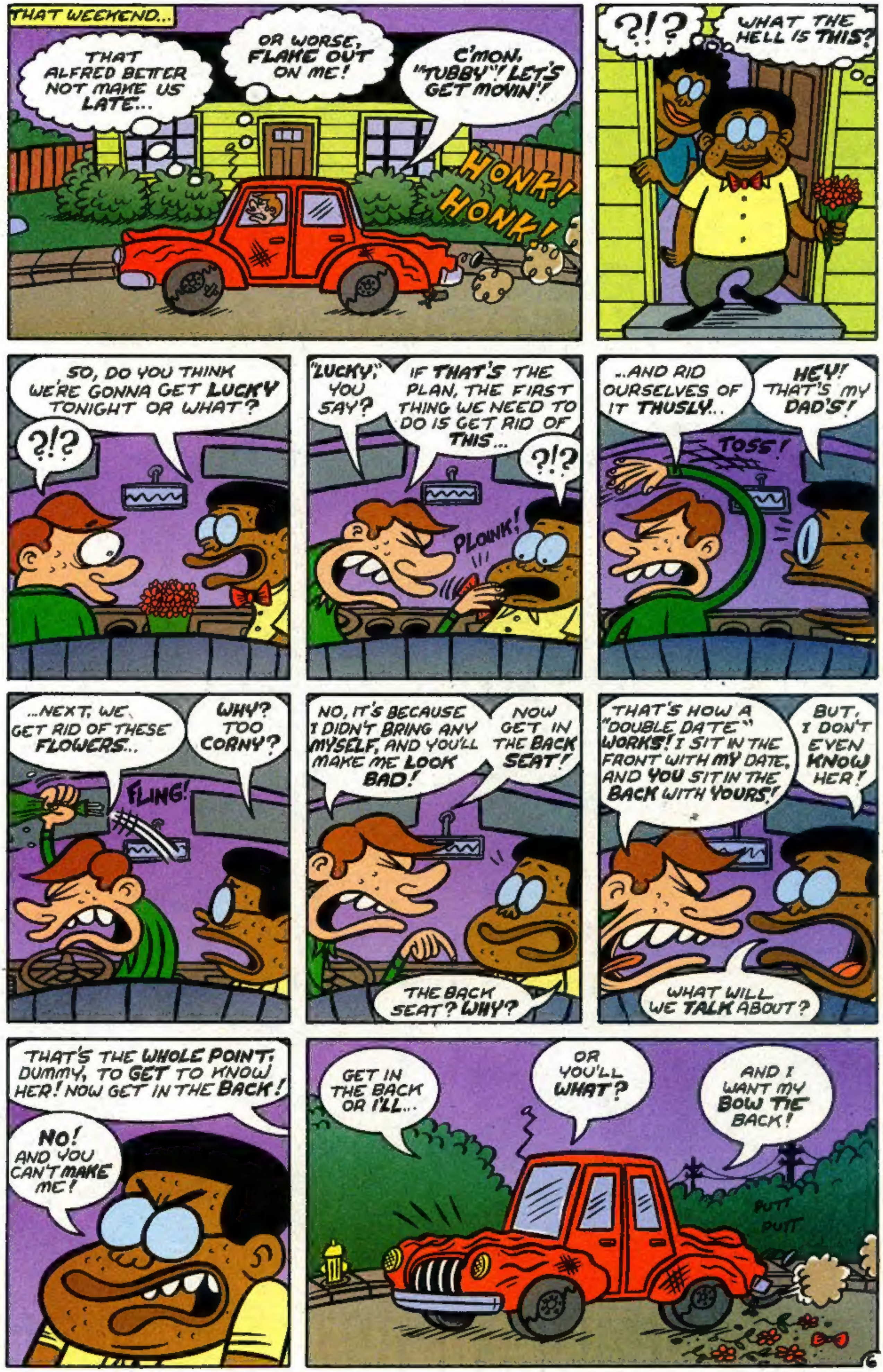
IT'S THAT DARING, DEATH-DEFYING, DOUBLE-DATIN' DUO, ALFRED AND NICK, IN:
THE WRONG DATES
WRITTEN BY P. BAGGE
DRAWN BY J. RYAN
COLORED BY J. BAGGE
SEPS BY ZYLONOL
EDITED BY J. CAVALIERI
...OH, WOW. SHE'S HOT...
SHE IS NOT! SHE'S A SKANK!
LOOK AT HOW SCRAWNY HER ARMS ARE...
YOU MUST BE BLIND!
LISTEN TO THOSE TWO! WHAT A COUPLE OF PIGS!
YEAH, IT'S ALWAYS THE GUYS WHO AREN'T GETTIN' ANY THAT HAVE THE MOST "DISCRIMINATING" TASTES.
BOOZE
MAXIMUM
SWEATSHOP CREATED BY PETER BAGGE
?!? "NOT GETTIN' ANY"?
ARE YOU SUGGESTING THAT BOTH ALFRED AND NICK ARE...
WHAT, VIRGINS? OF COURSE!
I MEAN, LOOK AT 'EM!
ER, YES, WELL, ALFRED IS CERTAINLY STUCK IN A STATE OF PRE-PUBESCENCE...
BUT NICK? I DUNNO...
THEY BOTH REEK OF VIRGINHOOD IF YOU ASK ME...
BOOZE
MAXIMUM
:GASP!: IT'S J-LO...
1


BUT, HOW CAN YOU BE SO SURE?
DID YOU EVER ASK HIM?
WHO, NICK? ARE YOU KIDDING?
AS IF HE'D TELL ME THE TRUTH...
I WONDER WHAT HE'D SAY IF I ASKED HIM...
HOO-BOY, CARRIE...
I WOULDN'T GO THERE IF I WERE YOU...
HEY! GIVE ME MY MAGAZINE BACK!
AND STOP DROOLING ON IT!
WHY NOT? I BET HE'D TELL ME THE TRUTH...
BESIDES, IT'S NOTHING TO BE ASHAMED OF...
SPEAK FOR YOURSELF!
I'M GONNA ASK HIM...
I'M DYING OF CURIOSITY NOW!
?!? ARE YOU NUTS?
DON'T WORRY, I'LL BE TACTFUL...
YEAH, RIGHT. AS IF THAT'S POSSIBLE...
HEY NICK, CAN I ASK YOU SOMETHING?
MAKE IT QUICK, 'CUZ I'M BUSY.
HAVE YOU EVER GOTTEN LAID?
W-W-WHY DO YOU ASK?
JUST CURIOUS, IS ALL...
MAINLY BECAUSE I'VE NEVER SEEN YOU GO OUT ON A DATE...
W-WHY, I'VE GONE ON PLENTY OF DATES!
WHEN? WHEN WAS THE LAST TIME YOU WENT OUT WITH A GIRL?
PLEASE GOD, DON'T LET HER ASK ME THE SAME QUESTION!
I CAN'T WATCH THIS...
TIME FOR MY LUNCH BREAK!


LOOK, I'M NOT TRYING TO BE RUDE...
YEAH, WELL, IT'S NONE OF YOUR BEES-WAX!
YEAH, WHO ASKED YOU?
...ER, WHAT I MEANT WAS... UH...
LOVELY WEATHER WE'RE HAVING, ISN'T IT?
BESIDES, YOU'RE NO BELLE OF THE BALL YOURSELF...
...SO WHAT GIVES YOU THE RIGHT TO GIVE US A HARD TIME?
I'M NOT! I'M JUST ASKIN'— OUT OF CONCERN MORE THAN ANYTHING ELSE...
SPARE ME YOUR PITY, GIRLY...
I DON'T NEED YOUR HELP!
YEAH! WE DON'T NEED YOUR HELP!
?!? WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?
WHO SAID ANYTHING ABOUT HELPING YOU?
...WAIT. WERE THE TWO OF YOU HOPING I WAS GONNA "SET YOU UP"?
W-W-WHAT-EVER GAVE YOU THAT IDEA?
I BET YOU'VE BEEN HOPING I'D FIX YOU UP WITH MY FRIENDS ALL ALONG!
BOTH OF YOU WERE! ADMIT IT!
I...UH..
S-S-SAY, HOW ABOUT THOSE NEW JERSEY DEVILS, HUH?
WHAT DO I LOOK LIKE, THE NEIGHBORHOOD PIMP?
GET YOUR OWN DATES, YOU—
OKAY, I ADMIT IT! I'M A VIRGIN!
THERE! SATISFIED?
...I... UH... HUH?
BUT I STILL DON'T WANT ANY HELP FROM YOU!
WE'RE PERFECTLY HAPPY WITH THE WAY THINGS ARE!
ACTUALLY, I'D LIKE TO KNOW IF YOUR FRIEND MAKI IS AVAILABLE...
OKAY, FINE...
FORGET I SAID ANYTHING...
YIKES! I'VE GOTTA FIX THEM UP RIGHT AWAY!
3


THE NEXT DAY...
YOU WHAT?
(SHHH! BE QUIET!)
(I ARRANGED A DOUBLE DATE FOR BOTH ALFRED AND NICK...)
IN ONE DAY? HOW IS THAT POSSIBLE?
DO THESE GIRLS KNOW NICK AND ALFRED?
ER... NO.
I SEE... YOU DID A BIT OF FALSE ADVERTISING, EH?
NO! ...WELL, MAYBE A LITTLE BIT...
BUT IT TOOK VERY LITTLE CONVINCING... PICKIN'S MUST BE SLIM THESE DAYS...
UH-HUH... SO THESE GALS ARE PRETTY UGLY, EH?
NOT AT ALL! THEY'RE...WELL, LET'S JUST SAY THEY'RE A GOOD MATCH FOR ALFRED AND NICK...
OH...DOES THAT MEAN THEY'RE BOTH VIRGINS, TOO?
ELLIOT!
I WAS JUST WONDERING IF ANY "TRAINING" IS INVOLVED IN THIS DATE, IS ALL...
HA HA!
SIGH... NOW HOW ARE WE GONNA BREAK THE NEWS TO THE BOYS..?
LEAVE ME OUT OF THIS!
"WE"?
BUT IF I DO IT ALONE THEY'LL JUST YELL AT ME!
THAT'S YOUR PROBLEM...
MEAN-WHILE, I'M OFF TO LUNCH...
LUNCH? BUT, IT'S ONLY 10:30...
SLAM
SIGH...
OH WELL, HERE GOES NOTHIN'...
4

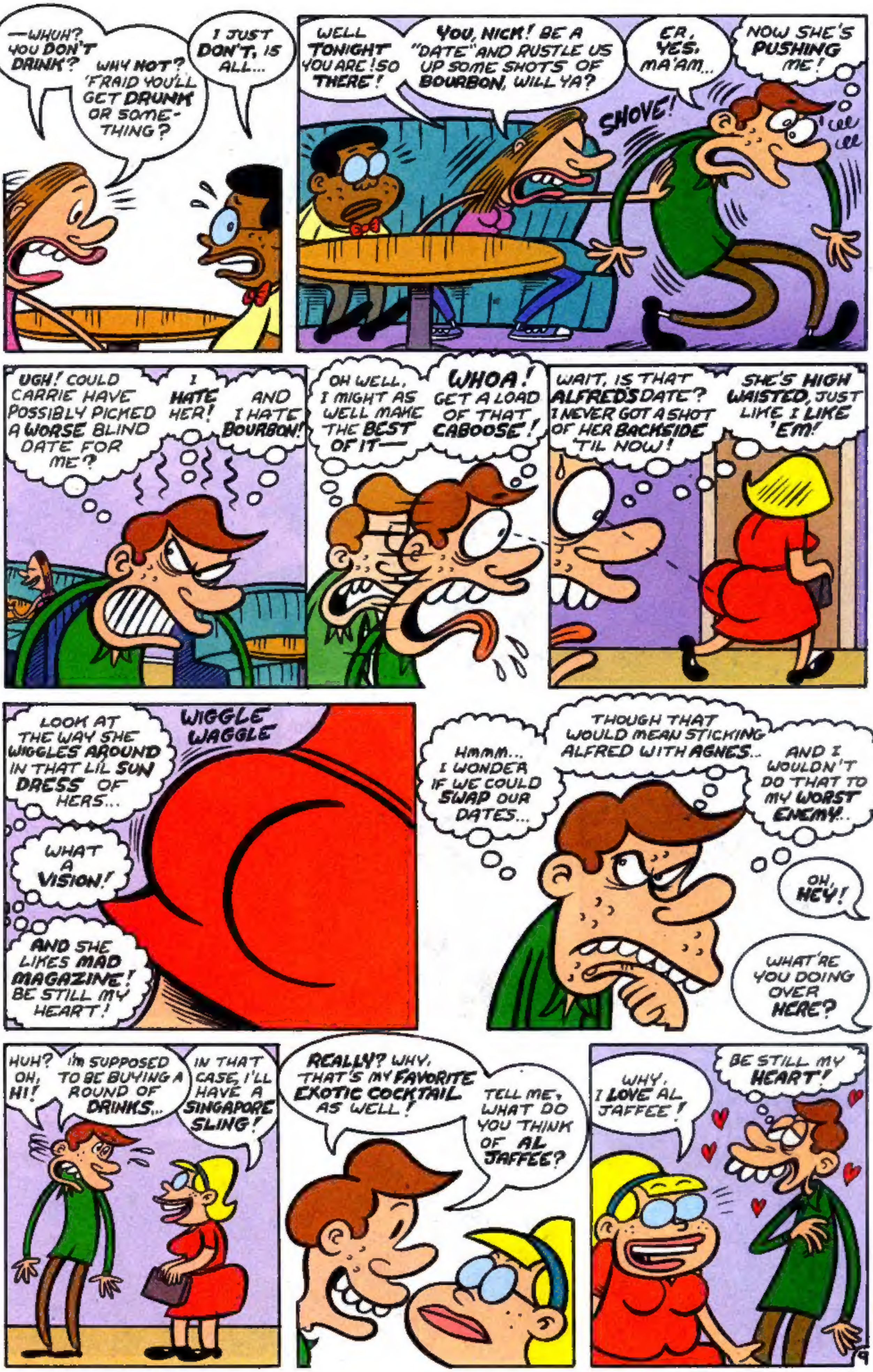

AND SO...
YOU WHAT?!
(SHHHHH! I DON'T WANT ALFRED TO HEAR)...
♫
(DON'T YOU THINK HE OUGHT TO BE HEARING THIS?)
(THIS IS HIS SOCIAL LIFE YOU'RE PLANNING HERE)...
(I WAS HOPING YOU COULD EASE HIM INTO THE IDEA, ONCE I'VE SOLD YOU ON IT)...
DUM DE DO...
YOU MEAN "IF"!
WHO ARE THESE GIRLS, ANYWAY?
TWO DOGS, I SUPPOSE...
THEY ARE NOT! THEY'RE BOTH PERFECTLY CUTE AND TOTALLY COOL...
WHAT ARE YOU TWO TALKING ABOUT?
CARRIE'S FIXED US UP WITH TWO DOGGIE FRIENDS OF HERS...
THEY'RE NOT DOGS!
ARE THEY FAT?
IS THAT ALL YOU CARE ABOUT?
NO, THEY'RE NOT FAT, EITHER! MISTER FATTY!
IF THEY'RE NOT FAT, THEN WHY WOULD THEY GO OUT WITH US?
POKE! POKE!
HUH..
THAT'S A GOOD QUESTION...
I REALLY DON'T KNOW WHY...
...LET'S JUST SAY THEY'RE BORED AND LEAVE IT AT THAT, OKAY?
"BORED," HUH? HEY, I RELATE...
WHAT THE HELL. I'M GAME...
ARE YOU SURE ONE OF THEM ISN'T AT LEAST A LITTLE BIT FAT?
WE-LL, OKAY, I'LL ADMIT THAT ONE OF THEM IS PLEASANTLY PLUMP...
I KNEW IT!
I SUPPOSE SHE'S MY "DATE" TOO, RIGHT?
DOES THIS HAVE TO BE A DOUBLE DATE?
5



THAT WEEKEND...
THAT ALFRED BETTER NOT MAKE US LATE...
OR WORSE, FLAKE OUT ON ME!
C'MON, "TUBBY"! LET'S GET MOVIN'!
HONK! HONK!
?!?
WHAT THE HELL IS THIS?
SO, DO YOU THINK WE'RE GONNA GET LUCKY TONIGHT OR WHAT?
?!?
"LUCKY," YOU SAY?
IF THAT'S THE PLAN, THE FIRST THING WE NEED TO DO IS GET RID OF THIS...
?!?
PLOINK!
...AND RID OURSELVES OF IT THUSLY...
HEY! THAT'S MY DAD'S!
TOSS!
...NEXT, WE GET RID OF THESE FLOWERS...
WHY? TOO CORNY?
FLING!
NO, IT'S BECAUSE I DIDN'T BRING ANY MYSELF, AND YOU'LL MAKE ME LOOK BAD!
NOW GET IN THE BACK SEAT!
THE BACK SEAT? WHY?
THAT'S HOW A "DOUBLE DATE" WORKS! I SIT IN THE FRONT WITH MY DATE, AND YOU SIT IN THE BACK WITH YOURS!
BUT, I DON'T EVEN KNOW HER!
WHAT WILL WE TALK ABOUT?
THAT'S THE WHOLE POINT, DUMMY, TO GET TO KNOW HER! NOW GET IN THE BACK!
NO! AND YOU CAN'T MAKE ME!
GET IN THE BACK OR I'LL...
OR YOU'LL WHAT?
AND I WANT MY BOW TIE BACK!
PUTT PUTT

AND SO...
...THE THING IS, I CAN SEE WHY LUCAS STUCK WITH THAT JAR JAR BINKS CHARACTER, IN SPITE OF EVERYTHING. YOU SEE, I—
ARE, UH, EITHER OF YOU INTO STAR WARS, BY ANY CHANCE?
I LIKE THE EARLY ONES A LITTLE BIT...
HELL, NO.
ANYHOW, AS I WAS SAYING, I THINK—
(WILL YOU SHUT UP ABOUT FRIGGIN' STAR WARS?!)
SO, UH, HOW DO YOU TWO KNOW CARRIE, ANYWAY?
THROUGH COMICS, MOSTLY...
YEAH, SAME HERE.
C-COMICS? REALLY?
Y-YOU GIRLS ARE INTO COMICS?
NOT REALLY. I WORKED AT A COMIC SHOP FOR A SPELL, AND CARRIE SHOPPED THERE...
AND I GOT TO KNOW HER AFTER BUYING HER OLD MADS OFF OF EBAY...
YOU LIKE OLD MADS?! LIKE FROM WHAT YEARS?
OH, I LIKE ALL THE "ERAS," BUT MOSTLY THE ONES FROM THE EIGHTIES...
HMPF.
(WHAT'S YOUR PROBLEM? AT LEAST YOUR "DATE" IS INTO COMICS!)
(SHE LIKES MAD. THAT DOESN'T COUNT!)
(PLUS SHE'S FAT!)
SO ARE YOU GUYS FANS OF THAT "FREDDY FERRET" COMIC STRIP YOU WORK ON?
OH, MAN...
ARE YOU KIDDING? THAT STRIP IS THE WORST!
WHY DO YOU ASK?
OH, I WAS JUST CURIOUS...
...BECAUSE I LIKE THAT STRIP!
I THINK IT'S REALLY FUNNY!
GROANNN...
AX-1

LATER...
J. C. I. HUMPDAY'S
MY WEAK BLADDER IS GIVING OUT ON ME AGAIN...
DO YOU KNOW WHERE THE LADIES' ROOM IS?
THE LADIES' ROOM? HOW WOULD I KNOW?
AND WHO WANTS TO HEAR ABOUT YOUR WEAK BLADDER? GROSS!
SO, IS "AGNES" YOUR REAL NAME?
YES! YOU GOT A PROBLEM WITH THAT?
UGH! MY "DATE" IS A DWEEB!
YES, WE'RE OPEN
HUH? N-NO! I JUST NEVER MET AN ACTUAL "AGNES" BEFORE...
I'M GUESSING FROM YOUR ACCENT THAT YOU'RE FROM THE SOUTH...
YOU GOT THAT RIGHT. NORTH CAROLINA, BORN AND RAISED...
CHAPEL HILL, TO BE PRECISE.
"CHAPEL HILL"? IS THAT ANYWHERE NEAR HOOTERVILLE? HEH-HEH...
CHAPEL HILL IS A VERY HIP COLLEGE TOWN...
...SO WATCH IT WITH THE "HICK" JOKES — YA DAMN YANKEE!
WHOOPS! I STAND CORRECTED...
SHEEH! BITE MY HEAD OFF, WHY DON'T YA — YA HICK!
I HAVE COUSINS IN RALEIGH...
WE USED TO VISIT THEM A LOT. I LIKE IT DOWN THERE!
'ZAT A FACT?
I PROPOSE A TOAST! TO RALEIGH!
WHERE THE HELL'S OUR WAITER?
HEY, WAITER! OVER HERE!
YEEOWCH! WHAT A SCREAMER!
UH, I DON'T DRINK.
8

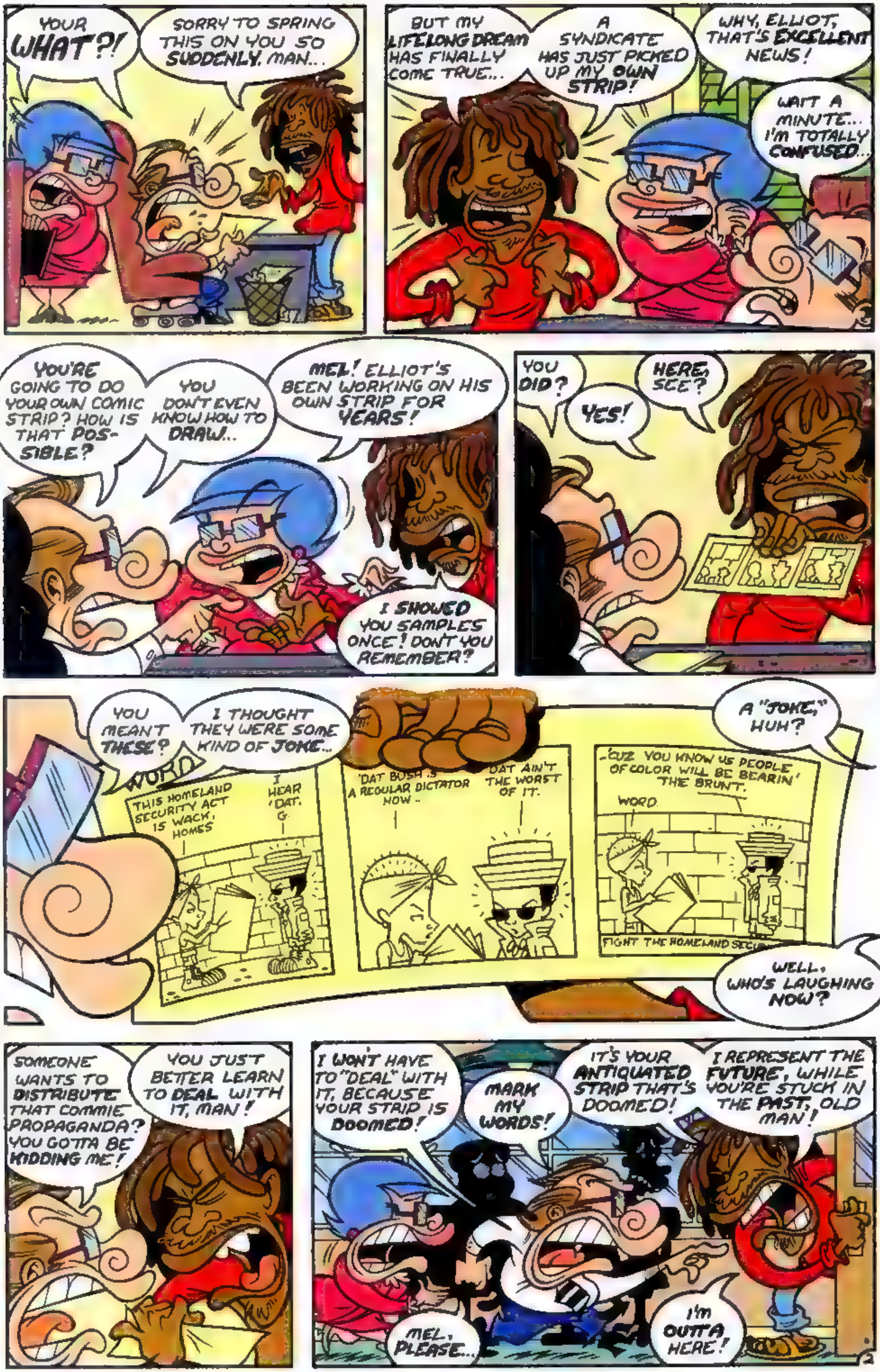


—WHUH? YOU DON'T DRINK?
WHY NOT? 'FRAID YOU'LL GET DRUNK OR SOME-THING?
I JUST DON'T, IS ALL...
WELL TONIGHT YOU ARE! SO THERE!
YOU, NICK! BE A "DATE" AND RUSTLE US UP SOME SHOTS OF BOURBON, WILL YA?
ER, YES, MA'AM...
NOW SHE'S PUSHING ME!
SHOVE!
UGH! COULD CARRIE HAVE POSSIBLY PICKED A WORSE BLIND DATE FOR ME?
I HATE HER!
AND I HATE BOURBON!
OH WELL, I MIGHT AS WELL MAKE THE BEST OF IT—
WHOA! GET A LOAD OF THAT CABOOSE!
WAIT, IS THAT ALFRED'S DATE? I NEVER GOT A SHOT OF HER BACKSIDE 'TIL NOW!
SHE'S HIGH WAISTED, JUST LIKE I LIKE 'EM!
LOOK AT THE WAY SHE WIGGLES AROUND IN THAT LIL SUN DRESS OF HERS...
WIGGLE WAGGLE
WHAT A VISION!
AND SHE LIKES MAD MAGAZINE! BE STILL MY HEART!
HMMM... I WONDER IF WE COULD SWAP OUR DATES...
THOUGH THAT WOULD MEAN STICKING ALFRED WITH AGNES...
AND I WOULDN'T DO THAT TO MY WORST ENEMY...
OH, HEY!
WHAT'RE YOU DOING OVER HERE?
HUH? OH, HI!
I'M SUPPOSED TO BE BUYING A ROUND OF DRINKS...
IN THAT CASE, I'LL HAVE A SINGAPORE SLING!
REALLY? WHY, THAT'S MY FAVORITE EXOTIC COCKTAIL AS WELL!
TELL ME, WHAT DO YOU THINK OF AL JAFFEE?
WHY, I LOVE AL JAFFEE!
BE STILL MY HEART!

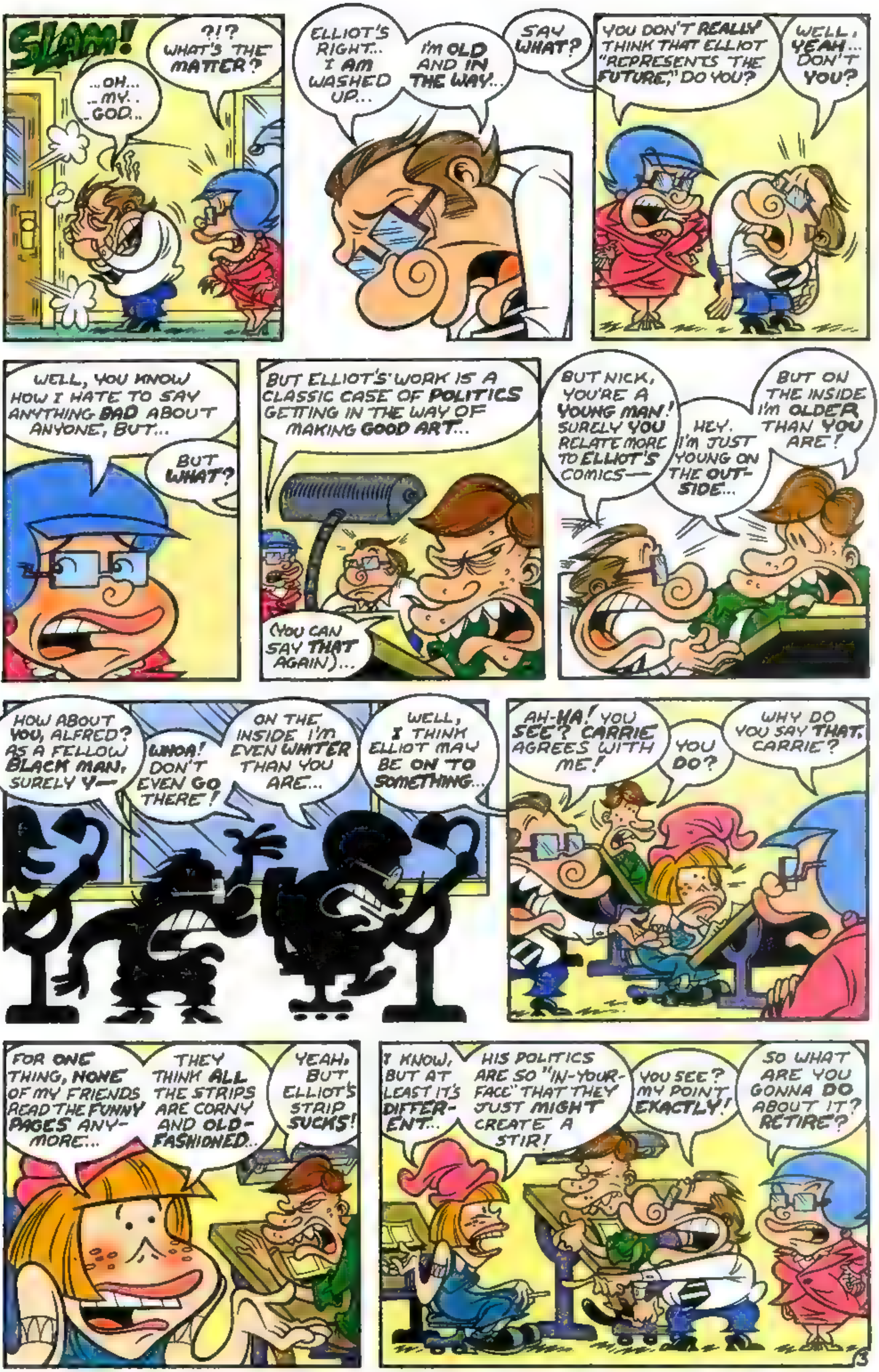
HOURS LATER...
WHOO-BOY! THAT WAS FUN!
I'M WASTED!
I CAN'T GET OVER HOW DELICIOUS MY WASABI SALAD WAS... :BURP:...
HEY, WHERE'S ALFRED...?
BLARF!
OH.
AWWW... POOR LI'L LIGHTWEIGHT!
WE'LL GO WAIT IN THE CAR, NICK...
UGHHHHH...
SO... HOW'S IT GOIN' THERE, LI'L BUDDY?
I FEEL LIKE I'M DYING...
OTHER THAN THAT, I'M FINE... BLURF!
OHHHH... REMIND ME NEVER TO DRINK JACK DANIELS WITH SHRIMP MARINARA EVER AGAIN...
HOW CAN I TELL HIM ABOUT ME 'N' JESSICA?
OH WELL, HERE GOES NOTHIN'...
LOOK, ALFRED, I—
THERE'S, UH, SOME-THING I GOTTA TELL YOU, NICK...
AGNES AND I ARE GOING OUT AGAIN TOMORROW NIGHT...
WHAT?
IT WASN'T MY IDEA!
AGNES INSISTED, AND I'M TOO AFRAID OF HER NOT TO AGREE TO IT!
BUT, WHAT ABOUT JESSICA?
AAH, SHE ISN'T INTO ME...
AS IF I CARE WHAT A GIRL IN A GRANNY DRESS THINKS...
SO, UH, YOU WOULDN'T MIND IF I ASKED HER OUT?
WHY WOULD I MIND? THOUGH I DON'T KNOW WHY YOU'D BOTHER...
HEY, YOU WIENIES! WHAT'S THE HOLDUP?
YOU KNOW WHAT, ALFRED? THIS IS THE PERFECT END TO A PERFECT EVENING...
HORRUP!
LET'S GO, YOU SLOW-POKES!
HONK HONK

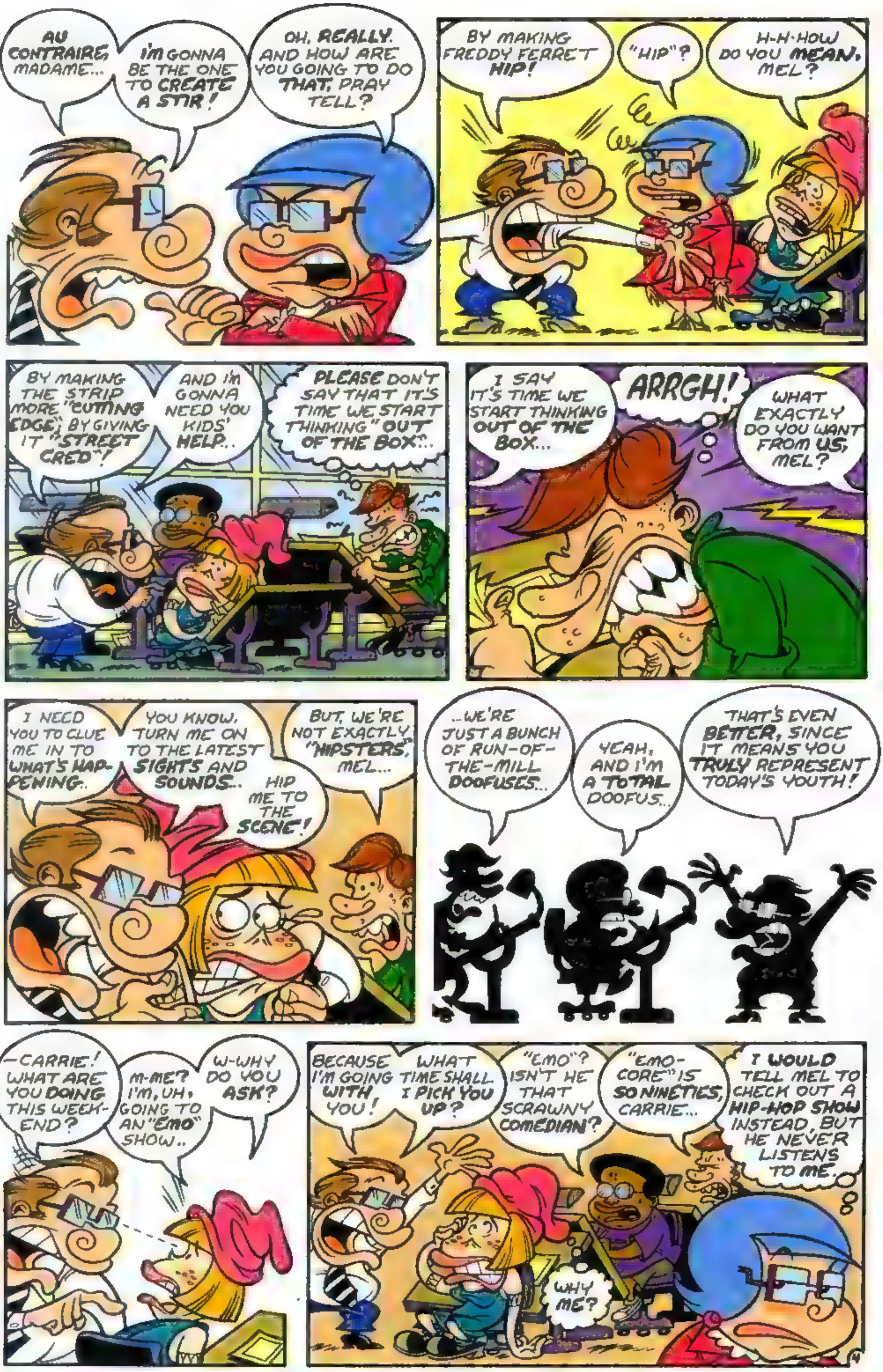
THAT MONDAY...
UH-OH. I WONDER HOW THEIR DATES WENT...
H-HEY, YOU GUYS! HOW'S IT GOIN'?
SWELL!
COULDN'T BE BETTER!
I, ER, HEAR YOU HAD A PRETTY EVENTFUL WEEKEND...
YUP! WE HAD DATES! TWO OF 'EM!
WE'RE "PLAYAS"!
TWO DATES? I DON'T-
FIRST WE WENT ON A DOUBLE DATE, AND THEN WE HAD SINGLE DATES!
WE GOT GIRL-FRIENDS NOW!
I'VE GOT A GIRL-FRIEND...
YOU JUST HAVE AN ABUSIVE, ALCOHOLIC PLAY-MATE!
SEZ YOU!
AT LEAST SHE ISN'T A BUTTERBALL LIKE YOURS!
WHO YOU CALLIN' A "BUTTERBALL," BUTTERBALL?
CHUBBY CHASER!
FELLAHS, PLEASE...
THIS IS NOTHING TO ARGUE OVER...
BESIDES, YOU KNOW WHAT THEY SAY...
"NEVER LOOK A GIFT HORSE IN THE MOUTH."
!
?
OH, AND CONGRATULATIONS TO BOTH OF YOU!
(WHO IS HE CALLING A "HORSE"?)
LATER!
HEY, CARRIE! I'VE GOT TO HAND IT TO YOU...
YOU ARE THE WORLD'S GREATEST MATCH-MAKER!
>SIGH<
WHAT'S THE MATTER? THE BOYS HAVE GIRLFRIENDS NOW, RIGHT?
THAT'S WHAT YOU WANTED, RIGHT?
YES, BUT...
...THEY'RE DATING THE WRONG DATES!
END

IT'S THAT LIVING, BREATHING INSTITUTION, MEL BOWLING, IN...
FREDDY GETS "EDGY"
WRITER: P. BAGGE
PENCILS: S. GLADDEN
INKS: J. BLANCHARD
COLOR: J. BAGGE
SEPS: ZYLONOL
EDITOR: J. CAVALIERI
@#✪☆!!
I CAN'T GET HOLD OF THAT NO-ACCOUNT PUNK, ELLIOT!
WHERE THE HELL IS HE?!
BEATS ME...
HE USUALLY SHOWS UP LATE, ANYWAY...
NOT THIS LATE! AND HE'S WAY PAST HIS DEADLINE!
HE HASN'T SUBMITTED A NEW SET OF GAGS IN AGES!
YOU COULD TRY WRITING YOUR OWN GAGS...
...OR HAVE YOU FORGOTTEN HOW?
THAT'S NOT THE POINT!
I HIRED THAT KID FOR A REASON, AND THAT WAS TO—
HEY, Y'ALL!
—YOU! IT'S ABOUT TIME YOU SHOWED UP!
YOU'RE WAY BEHIND SCHEDULE, YOU KNOW!
SORRY, MEL...
I'VE BEEN DISTRACTED LATELY...
NO EXCUSES! JUST FORK OVER WHAT YOU'VE GOT FOR ME...
AND IT BETTER BE GOOD...
OH, I'M PRETTY EXCITED ABOUT IT...
IT'S MY RESIGNATION.
1

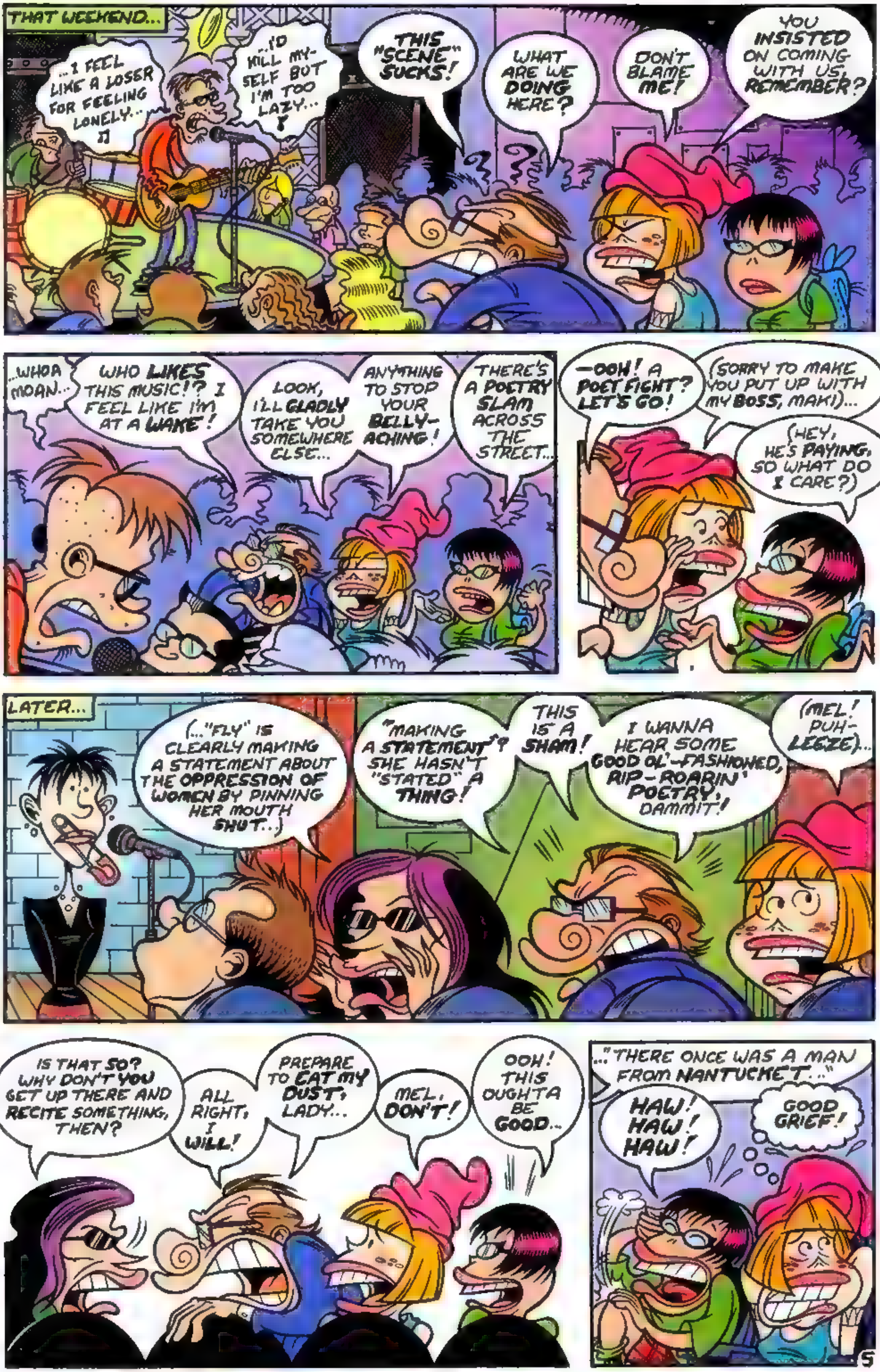


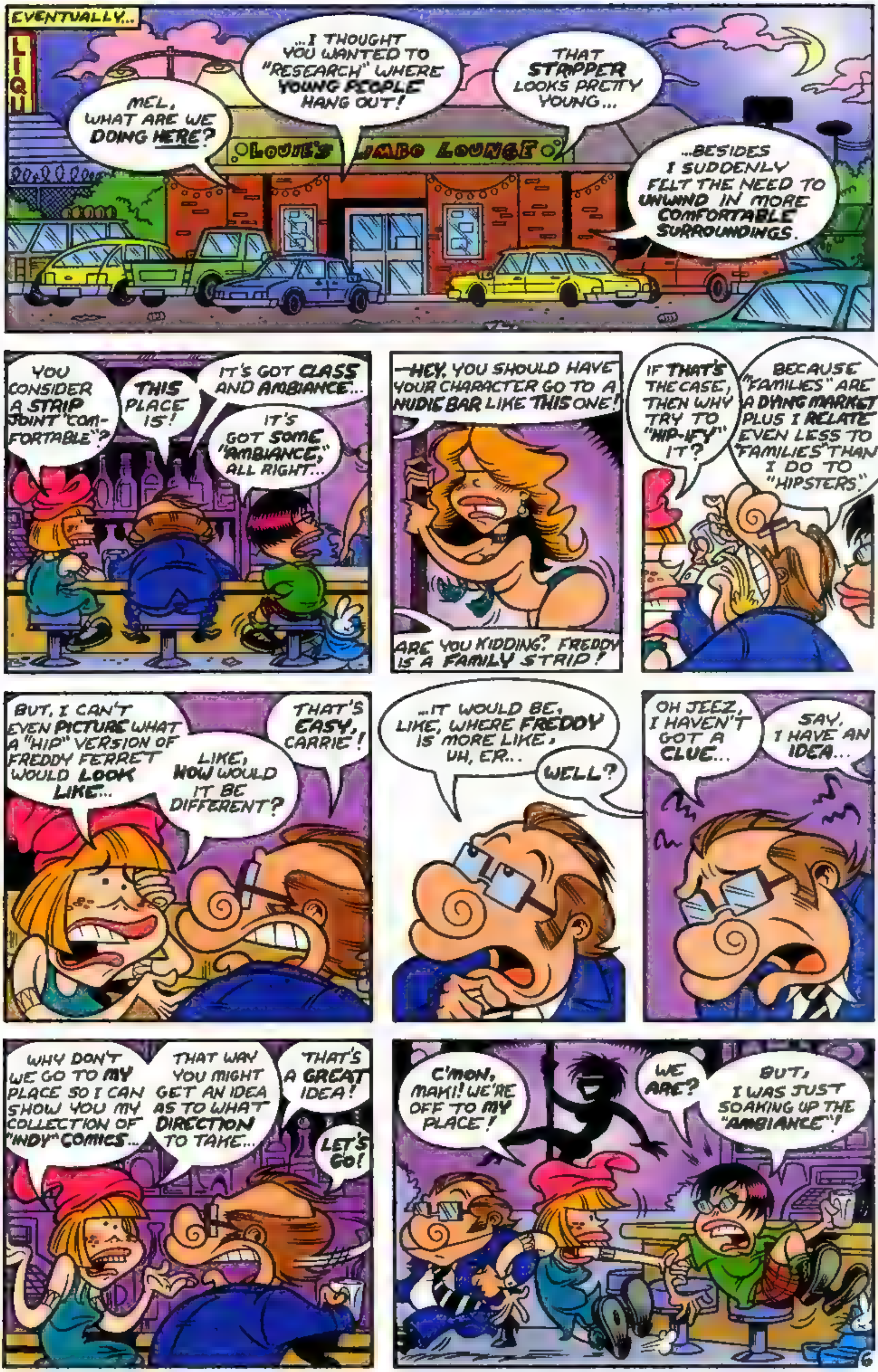
YOUR WHAT?!
SORRY TO SPRING THIS ON YOU SO SUDDENLY, MAN...
BUT MY LIFELONG DREAM HAS FINALLY COME TRUE...
A SYNDICATE HAS JUST PICKED UP MY OWN STRIP!
WHY, ELLIOT, THAT'S EXCELLENT NEWS!
WAIT A MINUTE... I'M TOTALLY CONFUSED...
YOU'RE GOING TO DO YOUR OWN COMIC STRIP? HOW IS THAT POS-SIBLE?
YOU DON'T EVEN KNOW HOW TO DRAW...
MEL! ELLIOT'S BEEN WORKING ON HIS OWN STRIP FOR YEARS!
I SHOWED YOU SAMPLES ONCE! DON'T YOU REMEMBER?
YOU DID?
YES!
HERE, SEE?
YOU MEANT THESE?
I THOUGHT THEY WERE SOME KIND OF JOKE...
A "JOKE," HUH?
WORD
THIS HOMELAND SECURITY ACT IS WACK, HOMES
I HEAR DAT, G.
DAT BUSH IS A REGULAR DICTATOR NOW -
DAT AIN'T THE WORST OF IT.
'CUZ YOU KNOW US PEOPLE OF COLOR WILL BE BEARIN' THE BRUNT.
WORD.
FIGHT THE HOMELAND SECU
WELL, WHO'S LAUGHING NOW?
SOMEONE WANTS TO DISTRIBUTE THAT COMMIE PROPAGANDA? YOU GOTTA BE KIDDING ME!
YOU JUST BETTER LEARN TO DEAL WITH IT, MAN!
I WON'T HAVE TO "DEAL" WITH IT, BECAUSE YOUR STRIP IS DOOMED!
MARK MY WORDS!
IT'S YOUR ANTIQUATED STRIP THAT'S DOOMED!
I REPRESENT THE FUTURE, WHILE YOU'RE STUCK IN THE PAST, OLD MAN!
MEL, PLEASE...
I'M OUTTA HERE!


SLAM!
..OH... ..MY.. ..GOD..
?!? WHAT'S THE MATTER?
ELLIOT'S RIGHT... I AM WASHED UP...
I'M OLD AND IN THE WAY...
SAY WHAT?
YOU DON'T REALLY THINK THAT ELLIOT "REPRESENTS THE FUTURE," DO YOU?
WELL, YEAH... DON'T YOU?
WELL, YOU KNOW HOW I HATE TO SAY ANYTHING BAD ABOUT ANYONE, BUT...
BUT WHAT?
BUT ELLIOT'S WORK IS A CLASSIC CASE OF POLITICS GETTING IN THE WAY OF MAKING GOOD ART...
(YOU CAN SAY THAT AGAIN)...
BUT NICK, YOU'RE A YOUNG MAN! SURELY YOU RELATE MORE TO ELLIOT'S COMICS—
HEY, I'M JUST YOUNG ON THE OUT-SIDE...
BUT ON THE INSIDE I'M OLDER THAN YOU ARE!
HOW ABOUT YOU, ALFRED? AS A FELLOW BLACK MAN, SURELY Y—
WHOA! DON'T EVEN GO THERE!
ON THE INSIDE I'M EVEN WHITER THAN YOU ARE...
WELL, I THINK ELLIOT MAY BE ON TO SOMETHING...
AH-HA! YOU SEE? CARRIE AGREES WITH ME!
YOU DO?
WHY DO YOU SAY THAT, CARRIE?
FOR ONE THING, NONE OF MY FRIENDS READ THE FUNNY PAGES ANY-MORE...
THEY THINK ALL THE STRIPS ARE CORNY AND OLD-FASHIONED...
YEAH, BUT ELLIOT'S STRIP SUCKS!
I KNOW, BUT AT LEAST IT'S DIFFER-ENT...
HIS POLITICS ARE SO "IN-YOUR-FACE" THAT THEY JUST MIGHT CREATE A STIR!
YOU SEE? MY POINT EXACTLY!
SO WHAT ARE YOU GONNA DO ABOUT IT? RETIRE?



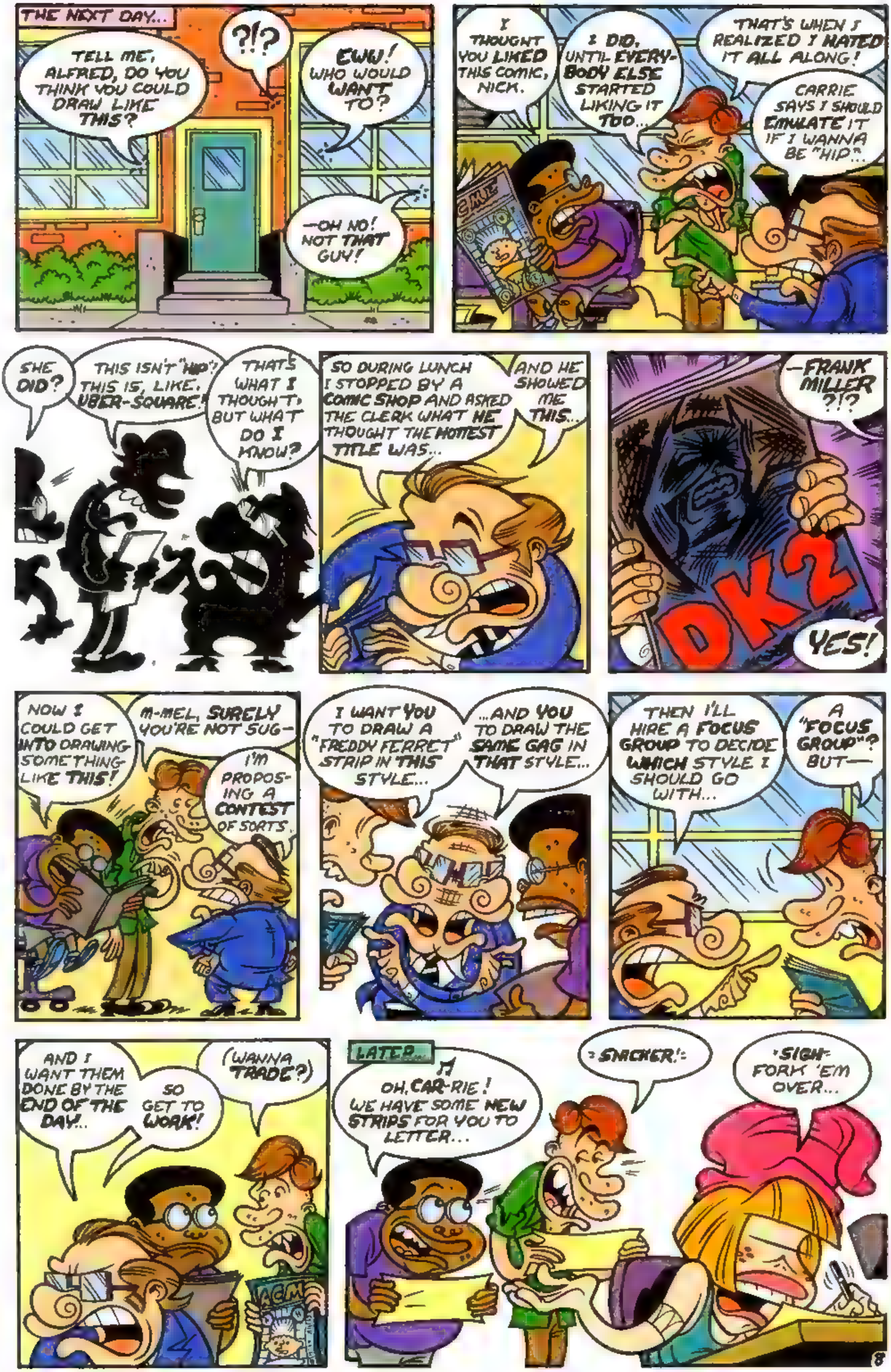
AU CONTRAIRE, MADAME...
I'M GONNA BE THE ONE TO CREATE A STIR!
OH, REALLY. AND HOW ARE YOU GOING TO DO THAT, PRAY TELL?
BY MAKING FREDDY FERRET HIP!
"HIP"?
H-H-HOW DO YOU MEAN, MEL?
BY MAKING THE STRIP MORE "CUTTING EDGE", BY GIVING IT "STREET CRED"!
AND I'M GONNA NEED YOU KIDS' HELP...
PLEASE DON'T SAY THAT IT'S TIME WE START THINKING "OUT OF THE BOX"...
I SAY IT'S TIME WE START THINKING OUT OF THE BOX...
ARRGH!
WHAT EXACTLY DO YOU WANT FROM US, MEL?
I NEED YOU TO CLUE ME IN TO WHAT'S HAPPENING..
YOU KNOW, TURN ME ON TO THE LATEST SIGHTS AND SOUNDS..
HIP ME TO THE SCENE!
BUT, WE'RE NOT EXACTLY "HIPSTERS", MEL...
...WE'RE JUST A BUNCH OF RUN-OF-THE-MILL DOOFUSES...
YEAH, AND I'M A TOTAL DOOFUS...
THAT'S EVEN BETTER, SINCE IT MEANS YOU TRULY REPRESENT TODAY'S YOUTH!
—CARRIE! WHAT ARE YOU DOING THIS WEEK-END?
M-ME? I'M, UH, GOING TO AN "EMO" SHOW..
W-WHY DO YOU ASK?
BECAUSE I'M GOING WITH YOU!
WHAT TIME SHALL I PICK YOU UP?
"EMO"? ISN'T HE THAT SCRAWNY COMEDIAN?
"EMO-CORE" IS SO NINETIES, CARRIE...
I WOULD TELL MEL TO CHECK OUT A HIP-HOP SHOW INSTEAD, BUT HE NEVER LISTENS TO ME.
WHY ME?
4

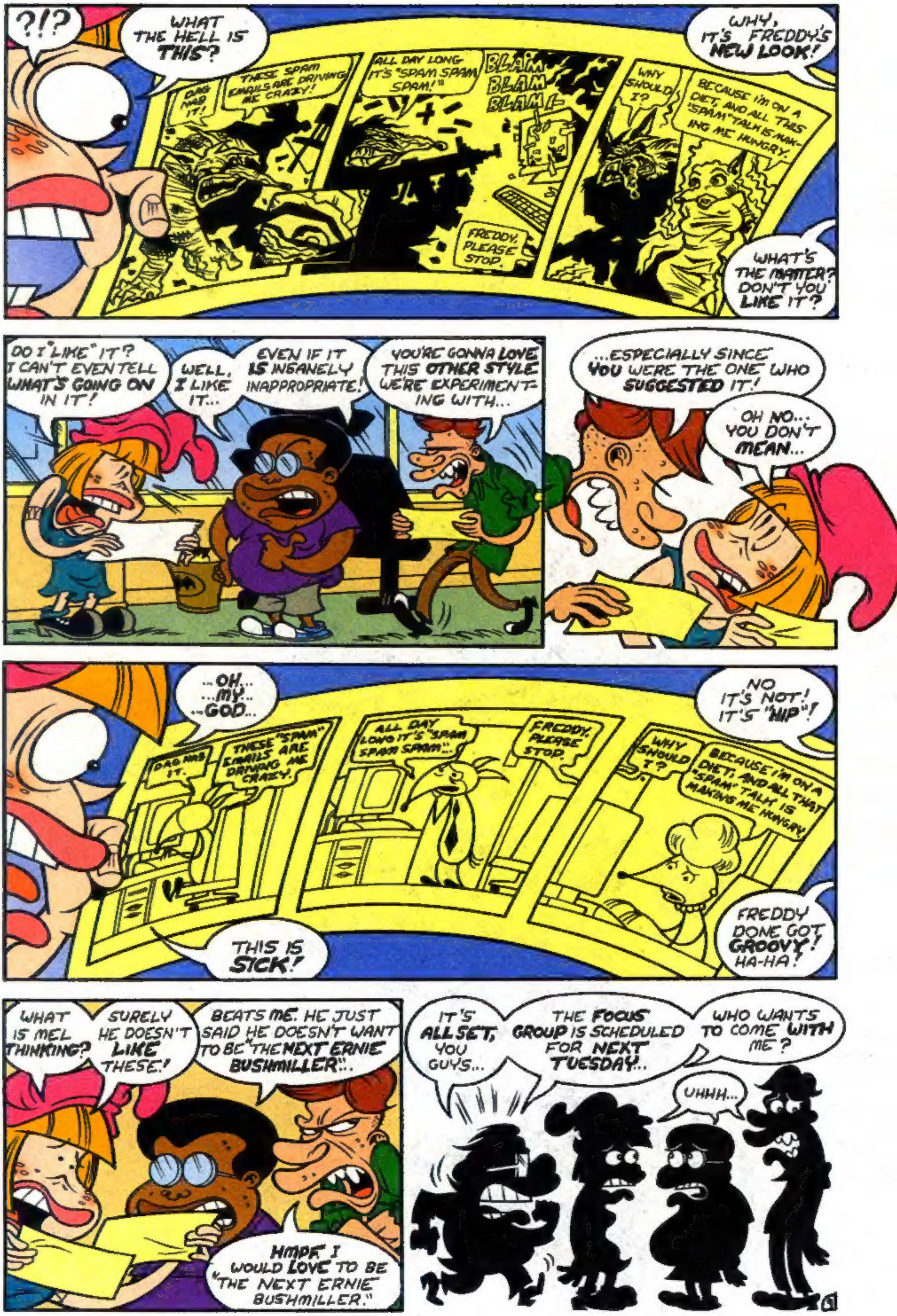

THAT WEEKEND...
...I FEEL LIKE A LOSER FOR FEELING LONELY... ♫
...I'D KILL MY-SELF BUT I'M TOO LAZY...
THIS "SCENE" SUCKS!
WHAT ARE WE DOING HERE?
DON'T BLAME ME!
YOU INSISTED ON COMING WITH US, REMEMBER?
...WHOA MOAN...
WHO LIKES THIS MUSIC!? I FEEL LIKE I'M AT A WAKE!
LOOK, I'LL GLADLY TAKE YOU SOMEWHERE ELSE...
ANYTHING TO STOP YOUR BELLY-ACHING!
THERE'S A POETRY SLAM ACROSS THE STREET...
—OOH! A POET FIGHT? LET'S GO!
(SORRY TO MAKE YOU PUT UP WITH MY BOSS, MAKI)...
(HEY, HE'S PAYING, SO WHAT DO I CARE?)
LATER...
(..."FLY" IS CLEARLY MAKING A STATEMENT ABOUT THE OPPRESSION OF WOMEN BY PINNING HER MOUTH SHUT...)
"MAKING A STATEMENT"? SHE HASN'T "STATED" A THING!
THIS IS A SHAM!
I WANNA HEAR SOME GOOD OL'-FASHIONED, RIP-ROARIN' POETRY, DAMMIT!
(MEL! PUH-LEEZE)...
IS THAT SO? WHY DON'T YOU GET UP THERE AND RECITE SOMETHING, THEN?
ALL RIGHT, I WILL!
PREPARE TO EAT MY DUST, LADY...
MEL, DON'T!
OOH! THIS OUGHTA BE GOOD...
..."THERE ONCE WAS A MAN FROM NANTUCKET..."
HAW! HAW! HAW!
GOOD GRIEF!

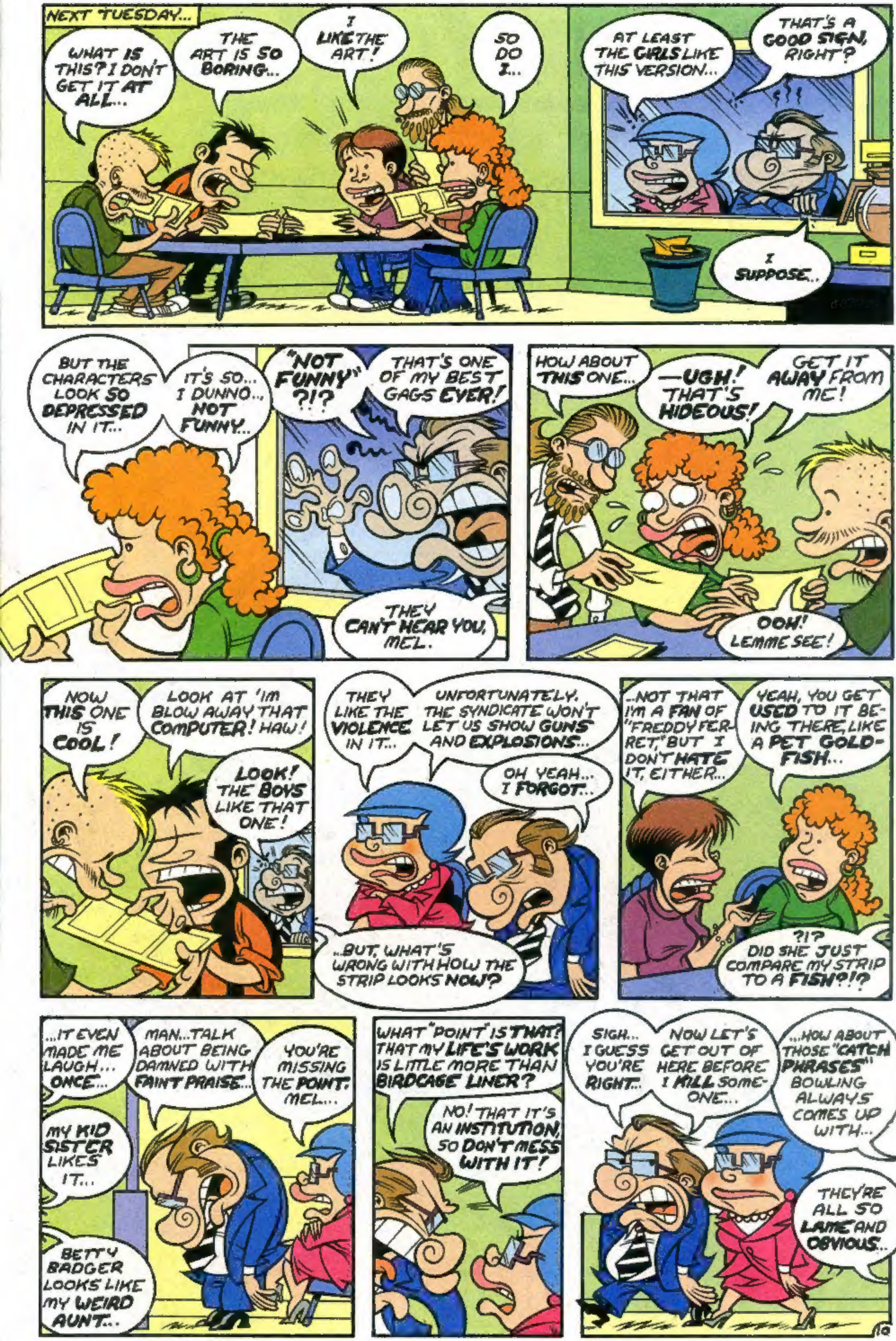


EVENTUALLY...
LIQU
MEL, WHAT ARE WE DOING HERE?
...I THOUGHT YOU WANTED TO "RESEARCH" WHERE YOUNG PEOPLE HANG OUT!
THAT STRIPPER LOOKS PRETTY YOUNG...
LOUIE'S JUMBO LOUNGE
...BESIDES I SUDDENLY FELT THE NEED TO UNWIND IN MORE COMFORTABLE SURROUNDINGS.
YOU CONSIDER A STRIP JOINT "COMFORTABLE"?
THIS PLACE IS!
IT'S GOT CLASS AND AMBIANCE...
IT'S GOT SOME "AMBIANCE," ALL RIGHT...
—HEY, YOU SHOULD HAVE YOUR CHARACTER GO TO A NUDIE BAR LIKE THIS ONE!
ARE YOU KIDDING? FREDDY IS A FAMILY STRIP!
IF THAT'S THE CASE, THEN WHY TRY TO "HIP-IFY" IT?
BECAUSE "FAMILIES" ARE A DYING MARKET! PLUS I RELATE EVEN LESS TO "FAMILIES" THAN I DO TO "HIPSTERS".
BUT, I CAN'T EVEN PICTURE WHAT A "HIP" VERSION OF FREDDY FERRET WOULD LOOK LIKE...
LIKE, HOW WOULD IT BE DIFFERENT?
THAT'S EASY, CARRIE!
...IT WOULD BE, LIKE, WHERE FREDDY IS MORE LIKE, UH, ER...
WELL?
OH JEEZ, I HAVEN'T GOT A CLUE...
SAY, I HAVE AN IDEA...
WHY DON'T WE GO TO MY PLACE SO I CAN SHOW YOU MY COLLECTION OF "INDY" COMICS...
THAT WAY YOU MIGHT GET AN IDEA AS TO WHAT DIRECTION TO TAKE...
THAT'S A GREAT IDEA!
LET'S GO!
C'MON, MAKI! WE'RE OFF TO MY PLACE!
WE ARE?
BUT, I WAS JUST SOAKING UP THE "AMBIANCE"!

LATER..
...THAT ONE'S BY DEBBIE DRECHSLER..
SHE DOES THESE PAINFUL STORIES ABOUT HER CHILDHOOD...
I LOVE THAT COMIC...
I HATE IT.
WHAT ELSE YA GOT?
AND WHAT'S THIS SLOP WE'RE DRINKING? IT TASTES LIKE DISHWATER!
IT'S CALLED TEA, MEL.
TOSS!
OH.
WELL, YA GOT ANYTHING WE CAN PUT IN IT? JUST TO SNAZZ IT UP A BIT?
YOU'VE HAD TOO MUCH AL-READY, MEL!
...(GOOD THING I ALWAYS COME PREPARED! HEH-HEH)
LET'S SEE... WHAT ELSE CAN I SHOW YOU...
:GASP!:
JUST SHOW ME WHAT'S HOT THESE DAYS, YA KNOW? SHOW ME WHAT'S GOT EVERYBODY TALKING..
OH...WELL, IN THAT CASE...
(PSST! CAN I HAVE SOME, TOO?)
...THIS GUY'S ALL THE RAGE THESE DAYS...
OH, YEAH! CHRIS WARE IS AWESOME!
?!? LOOK AT THE SIZE OF THAT THING!
JIMMY CORRIGAN SMARTEST KID ON
WHAT IS THIS, A JIGSAW PUZZLE?
I CAN'T MAKE HEADS NOR TAILS OF THIS!
YOU'RE READING IT UPSIDE DOWN, MEL..
:GIGGLE!:
OKAY, I SHOULD BE MOSEY-ING...
WOULD YOU MIND IF I TOOK THIS WITH ME?
NOT AT ALL! BE MY GUEST!
NICE TO MEET YOU, MEL!
:WHEW!: GOOD RIDDANCE!
AW, I HAD FUN HANGING OUT WITH HIM!
SLAM!
YOU DID?
YEAH! IT WAS LIKE SPENDING A DAY AT THE CAVEMAN EXHIBIT IN THE NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM!
7


THE NEXT DAY...
TELL ME, ALFRED, DO YOU THINK YOU COULD DRAW LIKE THIS?
?!?
EWW! WHO WOULD WANT TO?
—OH NO! NOT THAT GUY!
I THOUGHT YOU LIKED THIS COMIC, NICK.
I DID, UNTIL EVERY-BODY ELSE STARTED LIKING IT TOO...
THAT'S WHEN I REALIZED I HATED IT ALL ALONG!
CARRIE SAYS I SHOULD EMULATE IT IF I WANNA BE "HIP".
SHE DID?
THIS ISN'T "HIP"! THIS IS, LIKE, UBER-SQUARE!
THAT'S WHAT I THOUGHT, BUT WHAT DO I KNOW?
SO DURING LUNCH I STOPPED BY A COMIC SHOP AND ASKED THE CLERK WHAT HE THOUGHT THE HOTTEST TITLE WAS...
AND HE SHOWED ME THIS...
—FRANK MILLER ?!?
DK2
YES!
NOW I COULD GET INTO DRAWING SOMETHING LIKE THIS!
M-MEL, SURELY YOU'RE NOT SUG—
I'M PROPOSING A CONTEST OF SORTS.
I WANT YOU TO DRAW A "FREDDY FERRET" STRIP IN THIS STYLE...
...AND YOU TO DRAW THE SAME GAG IN THAT STYLE...
THEN I'LL HIRE A FOCUS GROUP TO DECIDE WHICH STYLE I SHOULD GO WITH...
A "FOCUS GROUP"? BUT—
AND I WANT THEM DONE BY THE END OF THE DAY...
SO GET TO WORK!
(WANNA TRADE?)
LATER...
OH, CAR-RIE! WE HAVE SOME NEW STRIPS FOR YOU TO LETTER...
SNICKER!
SIGH FORK 'EM OVER...
8


?!?
WHAT THE HELL IS THIS?
DAG NAB IT!
THESE SPAM EMAILS ARE DRIVING ME CRAZY!
ALL DAY LONG IT'S "SPAM SPAM SPAM!"
BLAM BLAM BLAM!
FREDDY, PLEASE STOP.
WHY SHOULD I?
BECAUSE I'M ON A DIET, AND ALL THIS "SPAM" TALK IS MAKING ME HUNGRY.
WHY, IT'S FREDDY'S NEW LOOK!
WHAT'S THE MATTER? DON'T YOU LIKE IT?
DO I "LIKE" IT? I CAN'T EVEN TELL WHAT'S GOING ON IN IT!
WELL, I LIKE IT...
EVEN IF IT IS INSANELY INAPPROPRIATE!
YOU'RE GONNA LOVE THIS OTHER STYLE WE'RE EXPERIMENTING WITH...
...ESPECIALLY SINCE YOU WERE THE ONE WHO SUGGESTED IT!
OH NO... YOU DON'T MEAN...
...OH... ...MY... ...GOD...
DAG NAB IT.
THESE "SPAM" EMAILS ARE DRIVING ME CRAZY.
ALL DAY LONG IT'S "SPAM SPAM"...
FREDDY, PLEASE STOP.
WHY SHOULD I?
BECAUSE I'M ON A DIET, AND ALL THAT "SPAM" TALK IS MAKING ME HUNGRY.
NO IT'S NOT! IT'S "HIP"!
THIS IS SICK!
FREDDY DONE GOT GROOVY! HA-HA!
WHAT IS MEL THINKING?
SURELY HE DOESN'T LIKE THESE!
BEATS ME. HE JUST SAID HE DOESN'T WANT TO BE "THE NEXT ERNIE BUSHMILLER"...
HMPF. I WOULD LOVE TO BE "THE NEXT ERNIE BUSHMILLER."
IT'S ALL SET, YOU GUYS...
THE FOCUS GROUP IS SCHEDULED FOR NEXT TUESDAY...
WHO WANTS TO COME WITH ME?
UHHH...


NEXT TUESDAY...
WHAT IS THIS? I DON'T GET IT AT ALL...
THE ART IS SO BORING...
I LIKE THE ART!
SO DO I...
AT LEAST THE GIRLS LIKE THIS VERSION...
THAT'S A GOOD SIGN, RIGHT?
I SUPPOSE...
BUT THE CHARACTERS LOOK SO DEPRESSED IN IT...
IT'S SO... I DUNNO... NOT FUNNY...
"NOT FUNNY"?!?
THAT'S ONE OF MY BEST GAGS EVER!
THEY CAN'T HEAR YOU, MEL.
HOW ABOUT THIS ONE...
—UGH! THAT'S HIDEOUS!
GET IT AWAY FROM ME!
OOH! LEMME SEE!
NOW THIS ONE IS COOL!
LOOK AT 'IM BLOW AWAY THAT COMPUTER! HAW!
LOOK! THE BOYS LIKE THAT ONE!
THEY LIKE THE VIOLENCE IN IT...
UNFORTUNATELY, THE SYNDICATE WON'T LET US SHOW GUNS AND EXPLOSIONS...
OH YEAH... I FORGOT...
..BUT, WHAT'S WRONG WITH HOW THE STRIP LOOKS NOW!?
...NOT THAT I'M A FAN OF "FREDDY FERRET," BUT I DON'T HATE IT, EITHER...
YEAH, YOU GET USED TO IT BEING THERE, LIKE A PET GOLDFISH...
?!? DID SHE JUST COMPARE MY STRIP TO A FISH?!?
...IT EVEN MADE ME LAUGH... ONCE...
MY KID SISTER LIKES IT...
BETTY BADGER LOOKS LIKE MY WEIRD AUNT...
MAN...TALK ABOUT BEING DAMNED WITH FAINT PRAISE...
YOU'RE MISSING THE POINT, MEL...
WHAT "POINT" IS THAT? THAT MY LIFE'S WORK IS LITTLE MORE THAN BIRDCAGE LINER?
NO! THAT IT'S AN INSTITUTION, SO DON'T MESS WITH IT!
SIGH... I GUESS YOU'RE RIGHT...
NOW LET'S GET OUT OF HERE BEFORE I KILL SOMEONE...
...HOW ABOUT THOSE "CATCH PHRASES" BOWLING ALWAYS COMES UP WITH...
THEY'RE ALL SO LAME AND OBVIOUS...
10

?!? ELLIOT?
WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?
THE SYNDICATE JUST FOCUS GROUPED MY STRIP...
OH? HOW'D IT GO?
TERRIBLE! THEY HATED IT!
WHO'D 'A' THUNK SO MANY COLLEGE KIDS LOVED GEORGE W. BUSH!
ONE KID CALLED ME A TERROR-IST!
OH DEAR... MAYBE YOU SHOULDN'T MENTION HIM BY NAME, THEN...
SIGH WHAT'S THE USE..?
MY STRIP IS AS GOOD AS DEAD AT THIS POINT...
GEE, THAT'S A TOUGH BREAK, KIDDO...
GOOD! THERE'S JUSTICE IN THIS WORLD AFTER ALL!
SO WHAT ARE YOU GONNA DO NOW?
I DUNNO... MOVE TO ANOTHER COUNTRY, I GUESS...
HOW ABOUT CUBA? YOU CAN BE CASTRO'S CIGAR BOY!
BUT IN THE MEANTIME I NEED TO MAKE MONEY...
TIMES HAVE BEEN TOUGH SINCE I QUIT WORKING FOR YOU GUYS...
OH? WHY DON'T YOU COME BACK, THEN?
SAY WHAT?
WHAT ABOUT ALL THAT STUFF HE SAID ABOUT MY STRIP BEING "ANTIQUATED," HMMM?
LOOK, MAN, I ONLY SAID THAT OUT OF ANGER...
THE TRUTH IS, WORKING FOR YOU WAS THE BEST GIG I EVER HAD...
IN FACT, YOU'D BE AMAZED AT HOW IM-PRESSED CHICKS WOULD BE WHEN I'D TELL 'EM I WROTE GAGS FOR YOU...
R-REALLY?
PAY NO ATTENTION TO MEL, ELLIOT...
AS FAR AS I'M CONCERNED YOU'RE A PART OF THE FAMILY...
THE DOOR WILL BE OPEN FOR YOU AT ALL TIMES...
THANKS, MILLIE... YOUR KINDNESS COM-PENSATES FOR A LOT...
HEY, ELLIOT, TELL ME MORE ABOUT HOW I HELP YOU PICK UP CHICKS!
I WANNA HEAR ALL ABOUT IT!
END
11

DC IN DEMAND

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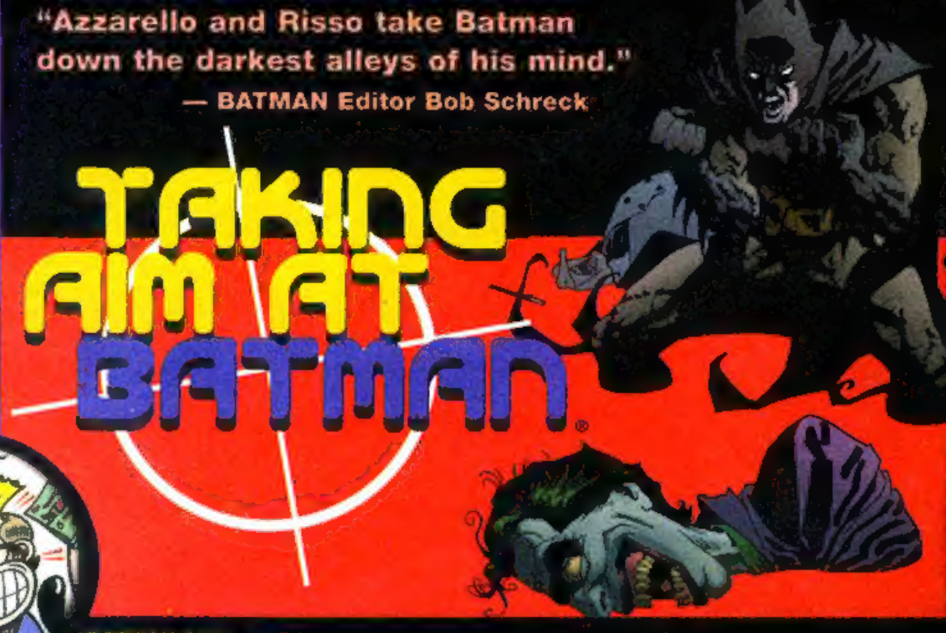
This Month's Cover by...
PETER BAGGE

Next Month in...

SWEATSHOP #5

The Sweatshop gang wish that they could forget "A Convention to Remember"...and so do the comic book pros who've consented to make cameos in this book-length story...in which good ol' Peter Bagge does the writing and the art!



BATMAN #620

100 BULLETS top guns Brian Azzarello and Eduardo Risso set their sights on the legend of the Dark Knight when they begin a landmark six-month run on BATMAN. Solving the murder of a child's parents forces Batman to revisit the tragic night that created him, where the most shocking discovery of all awaits. The mystery behind the mythos unravels in BATMAN #620 this October.

The Hot List THIS MONTH

FORMERLY KNOWN AS THE JUSTICE LEAGUE #1 OF 6

This new miniseries by Keith Giffen, J.M. DeMatteis, Kevin Maguire and Joe Rubinstein reunites the creative team behind the classic '80s JUSTICE LEAGUE!

SUPERMAN: BIRTHRIGHT #1 OF 12

Mark Waid returns to DC as Leinil Yu makes his DCU debut! Everyone knows Jor-El sent his infant son to Earth to avoid death on Krypton...this story takes a closer look at Jor-El's emotional struggles with the decision.

TEEN TITANS #1

DC's hottest new super-team debuts, featuring guest appearances by Superman, Batman, The Flash, and Jay Garrick! What do teenaged super-heroes do on the weekends? They hang with the Teen Titans!

EMPIRE #1

Mark Waid, Barry Kitson, and James Pascoe continue the Empire saga with a bold new start! The unstoppable tyrant Golgoth and his conquering armies have eradicated every significant military force on Earth, bringing the world into the grasp of a dictator.

PROS & CONS

Pack up your sketchbook – this summer DC dominates the convention circuit, starting with the Comic-Con International held inside the San Diego Convention Center July 17-20. With over 63,000 attendees in 2002, expect an even bigger and better show this year, yet when you consider the scheduled lineup we're bringing to this party – 100 BULLETS' **Brian Azzarello** and **Eduardo Risso**, **Ed Brubaker** (CATWOMAN), **Mike Carey** (LUCIFER), GOTHAM CENTRAL's **Michael Lark**, **Geoff Johns** and **Mike McKone** (TEEN TITANS), **Judd Winick** of OUTSIDERS, HAWKMAN's **Rags Morales**, **Kevin O'Neill** (LEAGUE OF EXTRAORDINARY GENTLEMEN), **Carlos Pacheco**, **Jimmy Palmiotti**, **Jill Thompson**, and FABLES' **Bill Willingham** – there's really only one booth worth visiting. Stop by and say hi! Comic-Con International is also the home of the prestigious **Will Eisner Awards**, and who else but yours truly leads the pack of publishers with 23 nominations? **Bill Willingham's** FABLES capped off a storybook year for Vertigo, garnering the most nods with four (Best New and Continuing Series, Best Serialized Story and Best Writer), while GOTHAM CENTRAL earned Best Writer nominations for both **Ed Brubaker** and **Greg Rucka**, plus Best Penciller/Inker for **Michael Lark**. Lark shares the nomination for his work on BATMAN: NINE LIVES, which is also up for Best Publication Design and Best Coloring by **Matt Hollingsworth**. Other multi-nominated DC titles include THE LEAGUE OF EXTRAORDINARY GENTLEMEN, VOL. 2 (Best Limited Series, Best Penciller/Inker for **Kevin O'Neill**); PROMETHEA (Best Penciller/Inker and Cover Artist for **J. H. Williams III** and **Mick Gray**, Best Coloring for **Jeromy Cox**); and last year's big winner, 100 BULLETS, which added two more notches to its extra-large belt with nods for Best Coloring (**Patricia Mulvihill**) and Cover Artist (SUPERMAN: RED SON's **Dave Johnson**). Even though the winners will be announced July 18, allow us to congratulate one and all here and now!

Once you've soaked up that California sun, we recommend joining the DCU Crew in the Windy City August 8-10 for WizardWorld Chicago. Among our legion of super-creators scheduled to appear are WizardWorld Guest of Honor **Jim Lee**, **Geoff Johns**, **Judd Winick**, **Lee Bermejo**, and **Ed McGuinness**, who's hard at work on the upcoming SUPERMAN/BATMAN monthly out this September! (Please note that due to forces beyond our control, convention guest lists are always subject to change!)

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To get more of DC In Demand's Inside Scoop, go to www.dccomics.com/dcindemand right now!

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SWEATSHOP 4, September, 2003. Published monthly by DC Comics, 1700 Broadway, New York, NY 10019. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to SWEATSHOP, DC Comics Subscriptions, P.O. Box 0528, Baldwin, NY 11510. Annual subscription rate (12 issues) $35.40. Canadian subscribers must add $12.00 for postage and GST. GST # is R125921072. All foreign countries must add $12.00 for postage. U.S. funds only.

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Printed in Canada.

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